

# CHARLES DAVID AND ALICE JANE WAGSTAFF THACKER



Charles David Thacker was born on November 28, 1883, at Buysville, Utah, son of Charles E. and Maria Price Thacker. He married Alice Jane Wagstaff on February 22, 1906. She was the daughter of Heber Jonathan and Sarah M. Shelley Wagstaff and was born December 31, 1884, at American Fork.

As soon as Dave could straddle a horse he had one, which he used to bring the cows home from the hills. Horses and oxen were Dave's pet hobby, always enjoying working with them to break them in.

When five years old, he ran away to school so often the teacher let him come and join the other students who ranged in

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age from five to 20 years. In some rural one-room schools, students up to 20 years attended, but not too many. He remembered one experience with a skunk that caused the teacher to send him home for a change of clothes. He rode to Charleston to school when he was in the seventh grade. His schooling ended for three years when his father moved to Wyoming. Three or four years later they sent him back to go on in school. He was 19.

Everyone walked, sometimes miles, to parties, entertainments, Mutual and Church in those days. In Wyoming the young fellows rode horses to take girls to the dances. There were many non-Mormons in Wyoming who were prejudiced against the Mormons, causing trouble around Ft. Bridger and Lyman.

When Dave was 20, in February, 1903, his father took a contract (on another man's word) to supply ties to a new rail line over a mountain. They had to be cut by ax, hewed and delivered on railroad grade. A group of 14 or 16 left Wasatch with their teams to skid and haul the ties. They got to Bridal Veil Falls at noon and found a huge snowslide. They camped for dinner, then doubled teams and got wagons over. They arrived at the camping place at the depot by evening. In the morning all were loaded on the train and shipped to Mack, Colorado. Arriving there, the horses were unloaded and put in a field to feed. Dave's best horse had his leg broken when he was kicked, so it had to be shot.

They started for their working place, but had alkali water to contend with. However, a surveying party supplied them with good water. After two days they reached the company commissary and drew the supplies needed, then were off to the mountains. The place was badly represented. The timber was red pine, scattered up the ledges where horses couldn't get, and with hard trees to cut and handle. All were experienced timber workers, but decided they could make nothing there, so piled what they had drawn from the commissary, covered it with a tarp and struck out through the country for Vernal. All they had to eat on the three-day trek to Green River was flour and water stirred together and baked in a fry pan with a little bacon. At Green River they were offered a ride across on ferry

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boats, because Bill Smith and Jake Stills knew the ferry men and told of their plight. It cost \$1 per team and 25 cents per man to cross otherwise. At Jensen they stopped at Joe Smith's. They tried to find work, but weren't successful, so some started home by way of Indian Canyon to Price. Strawberry was snowed in.

Dave found work at the St. Louis Gilsonite mine, two miles east of Ft. Duchesne, then to the Pariette mine, south of Myton. It was a wet mine and Dave became sick. Left there, and at White Rocks went to work for the man he worked for the year before. His wife was half-breed, so he could get contracts from the Indian department. Dave cut cord wood from yellow pine, knotty, gummy stuff, and then hauled to Ft. Duchesne, 20 miles away, with four horses. His father worked at the Pariette mine and then found work hauling water from Myton to the mine.

When they left for home they fixed up a six-horse outfit with two wagons and picked up a load of wool at Starvation to haul to Provo to the woolen mills. Heber sheepmen had wool at Starvation and Currant Creek. Received meager supplies at Ft. Duchesne, which had to last until they reached Heber. There were no towns in between.

Dave was 22 and Alice 21 when they were married. He fell in love with Alice when she was a little girl. He saw her the first time in Sunday School. He depended on working with his three yoke of oxen he had broken for all kinds of farm work and to make a living with, and worked with his father in sawmill work.

After he was married he worked in different organizations in the Church, as Sunday School teacher, in superintendency, as counselor in Sunday School, as president of YMMIA, and president of Elders' Quorum. Dave was active in dramatics for 20 years, and was an exceptionally fine actor even after he became deaf. He was head of the amusement board for a time, played baseball and loved to dance. He and Alice are fine waltzers, taking prizes on three different occasions.

Dave and his father bought a sawmill from Robert Turner, Robert Forman and Ed Clyde—the old John Turner mill in Daniels Canyon, above McGuire Canyon. They

HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

logged all winter in deep snow and came in every night wet to the waist and with their clothes frozen stiff on them. They moved the mill from here to Strawberry Valley, east of the Hub Ranger Station, where Dave and Alice spent their first summer together; then to Sugar Spring. A fellow from Green River came and wanted two timbers, 40 feet long and 18 inches square. Dave made a road up Dry Hollow, found a tree that would make these timbers, and he tells how he got it out for the man with his oxen. The timbers were for the sides of a ferry. They moved to Clyde Creek.

Then Dave was appointed an RFD mail carrier on a 20-mile route, which he traveled with horses the year round. He used a horse and cart, sometimes a horse and buggy, or a sleigh. Sometimes the snow was so deep he would use a pack horse to break the trail. He broke a number of horses for other people on this job, which he held for eight years.

His father bought another mill and two yoke of oxen from Senator Gardner of Spanish Fork and won a contract to furnish the timbers from the East Portal to the West Portal of the Strawberry tunnel. Alf Shelton drove for them.

That fall a moving picture company came from Hollywood to make a picture called "A Hundred Years of Mormonism." They used, as a stage, the part of Wasatch from Charleston, along the hills and over across Daniel, stopping for fiddling and dancing where Clifford and Delores McDonald's farm is. They used all of Thacker's oxen, a number of horse teams and 20 to 30 single hands, men and women, for about 10 days. Everyone enjoyed it so much. Saw the picture later, and their part was very good. About 1919 they lived at Bluebell on the reservation three years.

In 1902, Dave worked with the Indians at White Rock. He learned to understand them and speak some words, which he enjoyed doing.

Dave continued his sawmill work and farmed. He had a farm in Vineyard which the Geneva Steel Co. purchased. He was in the dairy business at Wallsburg and ran range cattle. He sold that and bought a ranch on lower Lake Creek. They make their home in Heber.

Alice has always been an ardent Church

DANIEL BIOGRAPHIES

worker and a very wonderful mother. She is very proficient with all kinds of beautiful handwork. She helps a great deal in the American Legion and in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Their children are: LaPrele, Ida A., Leila Marie, Lois Thacker, Charles Heber, Van Ness, Luella, Mae, Floyd Verl, Carma Ann, Lowell David and Lyle Vern.

Dave Thacker relates that many years ago a Mr. Lewis from Ogden and a Pack photography outfit were going to Vernal to do some work. They had a house ten feet wide built on wheels to use for living and working purposes. They hired Dave Thacker to haul the outfit out there by team. He could only go a short distance, then stop to chop out willows in order to get through Daniels Canyon. Now this road is a fine oiled highway, part of highway 40. Cattle and sheep are trucked through to their summer ranges. At any time of the year the scenery is most beautiful and when one comes out onto the bench overlooking Heber Valley, the sight is awe inspiring, a magnificent green valley with the backdrop of the Wasatch Mountains. A fine recreational spot called Lodge-Pole Camp was constructed by the Forest Service near the head of the canyon many years ago and recently a park was made near Whiskey Springs at the lower end of the canyon, which is available to tourists and people of the valley.—*Julia A. Anderson, Ethel D. Johnson*